If so, your child or adolescent may have a condition called Osgood-Schlatter Disease. Osgood-Schlatter Disease is a condition typically seen in the adolescent years during times of rapid growth. It is commonly seen in children who participate in sports involving running, jumping, or repetitive bending of the knee (ie soccer, basketball, football, gymnastics). This condition is seen more frequently in boys than girls and is estimated to affect 1 in 5 adolescent athletes.

**WHAT IS THE CAUSE OF OSGOOD-SCHLATTER DISEASE?**

Osgood-Schlatter Disease is a condition resulting from traction of the patellar tendon (tendon that attaches the knee cap to the shin bone) upon one of the tibias (shin bone) minor growth plates located beneath the knee cap. Growth plates are cartilaginous, and therefore, more subject to irritation than that of bone. In athletes who participate in sports involving a lot of running and jumping the patellar tendon pulls upon the tibial growth plate which subsequently causes irritation and swelling within this growth plate.

**HOW IS OSGOOD-SCHLATTER DISEASE EVALUATED?**

This condition is usually diagnosed via a comprehensive history and knee exam performed by a health care provider. X-rays of the knee may be beneficial in the diagnosis.

**HOW IS OSGOOD-SCHLATTER DISEASE TREATED?**

The mainstay of treatment of Osgood-Schlatter Disease is activity modification. The athlete should modify or decrease the level of activity based upon the level of the pain. Cross training (ie swimming or cycling) temporarily may be necessary until the pain subsides. Icing the painful lump several times per day (at least 2-3x/day) for 15-20 minutes per time can help to decrease pain and inflammation. In addition, an infrapatellar strap or brace can help to decrease forces acting upon the tibial growth plate and thus can aid in treatment of this disease process. Padding of the painful area during athletic participation may help to protect the area from a direct blow which may exacerbate symptoms. Furthermore, exercise programs given to perform at home or in conjunction with a physical therapist to strengthen the quadriceps and stretch the hamstrings may be beneficial.

**WHAT ARE THE SEQUELAE OF OSGOOD-SCHLATTER DISEASE?**

This disease process is usually self limited, and typically does not cause any long term complications. Within the vast majority of patients, once the tibial growth plate fuses the symptoms subside. Rarely, however, in more severe cases chronic pain localized to this area may persist. Additionally, a bony bump after the pain resolves may continue to be present. This bony bump, however, does not usually result in pain or functional limitations.

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